

**REPORT/RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
AND RECORD OF ACTION**

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September 9, 2003

**FROM: KENT PAXTON, CHILDREN'S NETWORK OFFICER
Children's Network**

SUBJECT: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR PROVIDENCE GROUP HOME

RECOMMENDATION: Approve Letter of Support to the State Department of Social Services Foster Care Rate Setting Bureau for the Providence Group Home.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Approval of this item will provide a letter of support for the Providence Group Home, enhancing San Bernardino County's continuum of care. The Providence Group Home will provide residential care for boys age 11 to 17 at Rate Classification Level (RCL) 10.

The San Bernardino County Departments of Children's Services, Behavioral Health, and Probation are responsible for meeting the residential treatment needs of minors in their care. Many of these minors need specialized residential treatment services which are ordered by the Juvenile Court or are required by the Education Code. Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code section 11462, the California Department of Social Services Foster Care Rate Setting Bureau requires a letter of support from the placing or host County prior to allowing a group home to receive reimbursement under the RCL structure.

On March 21, 2000, the Board of Supervisors authorized the Children's Policy Council to make group home recommendations to the Board. Additionally, the Board approved a protocol (entitled the Standard Criteria) which establishes the procedure for making such recommendations to the Board. The protocol is based on an annual needs assessment performed by the Children's Policy Council and provides a current assessment of the impact of new group homes on law enforcement jurisdictions, school districts or special education local planning areas, hospitals and other major medical providers, and mental health treatment resources. The current Group Home Needs Assessment was approved by the Board on August 26, 2003.

The State classifies group homes into RCLs based on types of service, levels of staffing, and treatment programs. The lowest RCL is 1, and the highest is 14. On August 19, 2003, the Children's Policy Council Executive Committee voted to recommend a letter of support for Providence Group Home to provide care at RCL 10.

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The Providence Group Home has been a State Licensed Small Family Home in Victorville, serving children with mild emotional/behavioral problems. Providence has been successful at meeting the needs of children who have histories of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, inadequate parenting or supervision, and relationship concerns. The primary source of referrals has been from the San Bernardino County Department of Children's Services.

This program is an important component in the County's system of residential treatment for children who would otherwise be experiencing multiple placement failures, lengthy inpatient hospitalizations, out-of-county placement, or long-term institutionalization at the State Hospital. Approval of this item brings potential cost savings to be realized through local placement of eligible minors at the appropriate level of care rather than out-of-county or higher-level placement.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: The Children's Policy Council Executive Committee has reviewed and approved these recommendations on August 19, 2003. This item was reviewed and approved by County Counsel (Ruth Stringer, Deputy County Counsel) on August 28, 2003, HSS Finance (Kris Letterman, Administrative Manager) on August 21, 2003, and the County Administrative Office (Gary Morris, Administrative Analyst) on August 20, 2003.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The recommended actions will not result in additional local costs. The RCL 10 rate per child is \$4,858 per month. For six beds, the monthly total would be \$29,148. This cost is divided between the County and State or Federal Foster Care funding, depending on how the youth is classified. The County's historical share of cost has been 42%, or \$2,040 per month per child. Adequate appropriations and revenue have been included in the FY 2003/04 Foster Care budget.

Cost Reduction Review: The County Administrative Office has reviewed this agenda item and concurs with the Department's proposal and recommends this action based on the potential cost savings of having eligible minors in appropriate residential care locally as opposed to out of county or at costlier levels of care.

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT(S): ALL

PRESENTER: Kent Paxton, Children's Network Officer, Children's Network
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